



CREEPY

#83
OCT 1976

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SUPER SUMMER SPECIAL



SEVEN SPECTACULAR STORIES!
COLOR! COLOR! COLOR! COLOR!



ART: BERNI WRIGHTSON



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CREEPY NO. 83 PUBLISHED MONTHLY EXCEPT APRIL, SEPTEMBER AND DECEMBER BY WARREN PUBLISHING CO. EDITORIAL, SUBSCRIPTION AND BUSINESS OFFICES AT 145 EAST 32nd STREET, N.Y. 10016. TELEPHONE (212) 685-6950.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: 8 ISSUES FOR \$10.00 IN THE U.S., CANADA AND ELSEWHERE \$12.00.

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CREEPY

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53 NOW YOU SEE IT With Harry's box he could be anywhere... or anybody. Space-man. Warrior. All was possible. But his wife, Della, wanted only to be herself!

61 THE LAST SUPERHERO They're out there... the Invaders. Hovering. Dangerous. I know where they are. But who are they? And why are they trying to kill me?

Dear Uncle Creepy...



CREEPY #80 was a fair issue! Its cover, however, was fantastic! It was a pleasure to buy a magazine with that kind of artwork! Congratulations Ken Kelly, on a masterful job!

"Benjamin Jones and the Imaginairs" was terrific. A great story, steeped in the EC tradition.

I did not like "Second Genesis" too pretentiously cartoonish but I loved "The Fable of Bald Shesha and Monte bank the Rogue." Great concept. Fun comic!

"Proof Positive" was not one of my favorites. The art was beautiful but it was annoying to have to turn the book sideways to read the story. It was an expensitend **Look!** **Warren** should by all means, continue to experiment but this one didn't work!

"An'th' Just Like The Night" was a good clear suspenseful monster story that didn't telegraph its ending long before the final page. More like this one, please.

I didn't like "The Asenman Cometh" or "The Last Chronicle," for that matter. Where were the vampires, werewolves, monsters?

CREEPY is a horror magazine, remember?

C. CRACKED
Muskegon, Okla.

Congratulations to **Budd Lewis** and **Luis Bermejo**! "Benjamin Jones and the Imaginairs" had a Ray Bradbury feel that captured both the wonder and horror of childhood. Bermejo once again proved himself a masterful illustrator of whimsical fantasy as he did earlier in "The January Man." A delightful tale!

JEFF SPENCER
Bridgeport, Conn.

CREEPY #80 combined the new and the old **CREEPY** story-telling.

In "The Asenman Cometh" and "Just Like The Night" we had **Bashed the Old days** the **EC** type of twist ending that characterized the early **Archie Goodman** tales.

CREEPY's new character-oriented direction was well represented in "Benjamin Jones and the Imaginairs," "The Last Chronicle," and "Second Genesis."

Which is better?

Neither. Or rather, both.

CREEPY #80 shows that the two styles can co-exist peacefully in the pages of the same magazine without sacrificing quality.

MARTIN MEYERS
Brooklyn, N.Y.

"The Asenman Cometh" in **CREEPY #80** was good, but too short. Five pages is just not enough for the kind of plot, character, and "twist" development that the writers **Gerry Boudreau** and **Carl Wesslar** were trying to achieve. It's nice to have seven stories in one issue, but not at the expense of quality.

TIM NICKERSON
Central Falls, R.I.

CREEPY #80 points out more clearly the need for a science-fiction magazine from **Warren**.

Look at "The Last Chronicle" or "Second Genesis." Well-written, imaginative. Good speculative fiction.

But one or two stories in **CREEPY** is not enough! We want more of that kind of quality **SP/Fantasy**!

Now that you've whet our appetites, how about serving up a full course?

JIMMY SIEBARTH
Baton Rouge, La.

CREEPY #80 was bland. Not really bad, but it provided little to get excited over.

The lead story, "Benjamin Jones and the Imaginairs" was the only entry that was fully satisfactory. **Budd Lewis** script, in the venerable **EC** tradition was good. And **Luis Bermejo**'s art continues to improve.

If only the rest of the issue lived up to this auspicious beginning.

Unfortunately it didn't. "Second Genesis" was disappointing. **Estaban Maroto**'s art was not to my liking. It seemed scratchier and less vibrant than usual. And the ending of **Gerry Boudreau**'s story was totally predictable. Standard sci-fi.

The two most interesting characters, the psychotic rat and lizard, were dropped at the end of part one, never to appear again.

From where I was sitting, the extra-terrestrial beauty contest had nothing whatsoever to do with the story. It seems to have been introduced solely to give **Maroto** a chance to draw some great-looking girls. And that's just plain lazy plotting.

BRIAN CADEN
Cincinnati, Oh

Ken Kelly's cover for **CREEPY #80** was magnificent! Rarely have I seen such a fierce looking demon or a lovelier damsel in distress! It is simply composed, executed with just the right amount of detail, and appealing to the eye.

If you'd gotten rid of the cover blurb, **Warren** would have had the perfect poster cover!

KENNETH JAY
Rockport, MA

"Second Genesis" was entertaining although the balloon placement sometimes made the story difficult to follow. The carefully plotted and thought-provoking theme of a man trapped between past and present of cyclic time was presented with realistic "extra" touches, such as telepathic animals, an interstellar beauty pageant, and liberal doses of sadistic humor.

These raised the story above the level of a one-idea, "gimmick." **Estaban Maroto**'s art was every bit as good as we've come to expect from this brilliant, innovative illustrator.

JOHN BROWN
Smithtown, Wash.

CREEPY #80 offered up what I hope to be a trend in upcoming **Warren** books, move towards a more spitting, positive story, rather than a constant barrage of doom and horror.

Doug Moench and **Marlin Salvador**'s "Ain't It Just Like The Night" stands out as an extremely well handled story of mystery, suspense, science-fiction and interplanetary drama. A clean reserve in both the script and art provided for an uncluttered and effective graphic statement.

The understated and effective crooked cop sequence was a masterful demonstration of how gracefully **Moench** and **Salvador** work together.

And the tragedies of the ending, the final note was an optimistic one that there would be some hope for man that he was worth saving. It's a pleasant ton among all the psychopaths and axe-murders.

ROBERT R. WEBB
Denton, Tex

The clever **Bill DuBay** script for "The Fable of Bald Shesha and Monte bank the Rogue" could not carry this story alone. **Jose Bea**'s art was simply not his best. Of course, **Bea**'s style is more appropriate to the bizarre and fantastic. Perhaps **Aurleon** would have been a better choice.

RALPH SMITH
Augusta, Ga.

At one time, **CREEPY** was full of pretty pictures. A lot of faces in static poses, but little action and even less continuity between panels.

Now, the pretty pictures are still there, as is the meticulous attention to detail, but something new has been added, storytelling. The art no longer seems detached from the story. The two work together to create an overall effect.

In **CREEPY #80**, the art of **Luis Bermejo**, **Jose Ortiz** and **Jorge Gálvez** still has an "illustrative" rather than "comic" style. But now it contributes to the flow of the story, it advances the action. It no longer seems like a series of still lifes or spot shots.

STEVE MITCHEM
Cincinnati, Ohio

I seldom write a letter to any publication I do so only when I am as moved as I was by a story (**CREEPY #80**).

"Second Genesis" in my opinion, this story ranks with the best of the science-fiction genre.

As a writer/illustrator myself I can fully appreciate the harmonious union of both story (**Gerry Boudreau**) and art (**Estaban Maroto**) necessary to pull off an ending so thought-provoking and controversial, that it revealed the finale of "Forbidden Planet" (Hm) and "Silent Running."

Before shooting, most films are designed on storyboards. These scenes are blocked out by the director before shooting, as was done in "2001." And as one former co-worker once told me, "if it doesn't look good on paper, it ain't gonna look so hot on celluloid."

Well, if looking good on paper counts, **Warren** had some winner's this issue that would make it in any medium, be it book, comic pulp, or film. Without going into graphic arts or creative writing I'll be brief and say that, judging by issue #80, the best work between **Warren**'s artists and writers is right and is especially right between **Boudreau** and **Maroto**!

JOSEPH BILLIE
Los Angeles, Calif

opinions? write...

**DEAR UNCLE
CREEPY**

c/o Warren Publishing
145 E. 32nd Street
New York, N.Y. 10016

PROLOGUE

THERE THEY ARE AGAIN THE NOISES. THEY EVER BEGIN THIS WAY FIRST THE TAPPING SOUND AND THE HEAVY DRAGGING FOOTSTEPS, NEXT THE RATTLING CHAIRS... AND THEN THE INEVITABLE ADVANCE.

TAP TAP
TAP TAP

IT HAPPENS... EVERY NIGHT IT HAS HAPPENED THIS LONG NO FIRST EYE WITH THE WRETCHED, HAUNTED OLD HOUSE

KLINK KLINK



I AM A WRITER BY TRAFF. BUT IT IS NOT AUTHOR'S IMAGINATION THAT KICKS COMES ABOUT AS THE STRIDE OF THOSE EACH NIGHT. THAT EXPLANATION I REJECTED LONG AGO



THE SOUND, THE FOOTSTEPS, THE HAUNTING ARE GROWING. EACH NIGHT THEY BEGIN, SURELY, BUT SO SURELY, DESCENDING THE CREEPY ATTIC STAIRS.



YET THE DRIVE TO THE MUSTY, ABANDONED ATTIC NEVER OPENS. THE FOOTSTEPS CEASE ON THE STEP WITHOUT. ALWAYS, EACH NIGHT, I SELECT THE DOOR TO REMAIN OPEN, UNLEASHING DARK PASSIONS.

IT NEVER WORKS.

THE BREATHING THE BARRELS, ACCURSED BREATHING HEAVILY BREATHING. SLOW, HEAVY, AS IF SOMEONE LUNGES JUST BEHIND THE DOOR, WAITING TO Pounce, READY TO BARE INTO MY NOSE.



ALWAYS. EVER ALWAYS I MUST REACH FOR THE DOOR. I MUST OPEN IT. I MUST SEE THE NEW HORRORS LURK IN WAIT ON THE OTHER SIDE



AND ALWAYS. I AM CONFRONTED WITH A NEW, FAR DIFFERENT TERROR.



THE Strange, incurable Hauntings of Terrible Phinneas BOGGS



IT BEGAN A YEAR AGO,
JUST AFTER MY PURCHASE
OF THIS STUNNING,
DISCREETLY VICTORIAN
MANSION.



I HAD BEEN PRACTISING MY CRAFT
FOR A DECADE AND, AT LAST, MY
NOVELS WERE SELLING WELL ENOUGH
TO ALLOW CERTAIN SELF-INDULGENCE.
MY LATEST, THIS ESTATE, FORMERLY
BELONGED TO ONE LATE
PAINFUL BOBO.

I PURCHASED THE OLD MANSION FULLY AWARE THAT IT
REEKED OF THE GOTHIC MOOD FOUND WITHIN MY
STORIES. I REASONED THE HOUSE'S ANTIQUATED
ATMOSPHERE WOULD CREATE THE PROPER MOOD
FOR MY WRITING WORKS... AND THAT MOOD, IN
TURN, WOULD REFLECT ITSELF IN MY WRITINGS.



MISC.
BOOKS

MY EXPECTATIONS WERE FULFILLED.
FROM THE VERY FIRST NIGHT, A CHILL
OPPRESSION SEIZED MY SOUL... IN
A STEEL PLOT OF TERROR.

I HAD NOT EVEN COMPLETED UNPACKING WHEN I FORNED
UPON MY REMNANT SLEEP TO OPEN MY NEWEST NOVEL,
BARBARA, THE WAMPYRE GIRL!



THE NOISE WAS BUMPY, THE HOUSE WAS QUIET AND RESPIR-
ING, AND MY FINGERES BOARED EXCITEDLY OVER THE
KEYS. PROCEDED, I DID NOT NOTICE THE NOISES
YET QUASLY THE HAUNTING SOUNDS MUST HAVE BEEN
IN EVIDENCE... FOR THEY HAVE INVADED MY PRIVACY
EVERY NIGHT SINCE.

I WAS ABSORBED IN AN INTENSE LOVE
SCENE BETWEEN MY HEROINE AND HER
LYCANTHROPIC COUSIN, WHEN AN
UNCOMFORTABLE BLAST OF CHILL
AIR SHATTERED MY FANTASIES.
CONSCIOUSLY, I SHOULDED THE DIS-
COMFORT, I WANTED NOTHING TO
INTERUPT MY PASSIONATE PROSE.



THE UNCOMFORTABLE FEELING INCREASED... AS THOUGH
SHADOWS WERE STAGING THROUGH ME. I BECAME IN-
TINCTLY AWARE OF THE DARK EFFECT UPON THE HAIR OF MY
NECK... CONSCIOUS TOO, OF THE LAMENTABLE, MOUTHLESS
RIGHT WITHIN, AND THE DARK, CREEPING SHADOWS
WITHIN.

SUDDENLY... FEARS GOTTEN ME, I
STARTED MOANING AND INSTANTLY AN
ARROW FLASHED FROM THE SHADOWS.
SUCKER THE DEADENING SILENCE,
HOLDING MY HEAD AS ANOTHER SERVICE
BANGING ITSELF IN THE WALL AT
MY SIDE.



I MANAGED TO SEE WHENCE THE
SHARP HAD SPRUNG, AND STAMING,
UNMISTAKEABLE IN THE DARK SHADOWS,
WAS A MAN, BEARING AN UNUSUAL
RESEMBLANCE TO THAT LEGENDARY
RAPSCALLION OF FICTION... **ROBIN
HOOD!**



STARTLED, CHOKING ON WORDS I COULD
NOT FORM, I WATCHED IN SHEER
TERROR AS THE HIDEOUS AFFECTION
WHICH HAD BEGOTTEN FROM ITS
BREATH, WHIRLING WITH SILENT,
BURNING EYES, THE UNMISTAK-
ABLE COMMAND: **EN GARDE!**



IN ONE LIGHTNING LINCOS, THE BRAT WAS UPON ME. I PROCEEDED HIS FIRST THIRST, TAPPING ON THE HATCH OF MY DESK IN A PANIC-LAIDEN ATTEMPT AT ESCAPE.



THEN, AS I WATCHED IN ABSECT HORROR, THE MAN SPECTACULARLY ARCHED HIS HEAVY BROWBROWED HORN OVER HIS HEAD, READY FOR HIS FINAL, INEVITABLE BLOW!



IN TERROR-FELLED PANIC, I SCRAMLED FOR MY PENWAGON ELECTRIC, AND MANAGED, IN THE NICK OF TIME, TO POSITION THE MACHINE ABOVE MY HEAD.



THE SWORD CLANGED NOISEFULLY UPON THE PENWAGON, WITH ENOUGH JOLTING BRUTE FORCE TO WORKARE EVERY MUSCLE IN TWO ACHING ARMS.

I SAT, FRAZEELED, TRYING TO RECOVER FROM THE SHOCK HELPLESS TO PREVENT THE NEXT, INEVITABLE THREAT. I WATCHED IN HORRIFIED AMASHEMENT AS MY ATTACKER SNOWED HIS SWORD CLEANLY INTO MY HEART.



LEAVING THE DRAPLY WEAPON BUTWYH ITS MOST CRITICAL WOUND. HE STEPPED BACK, HANGS ON HIS HIPS, LAUGHING WAGNALLY AS I TAPER UNABLE TO FEEL THE HEAVY BROW-SWORD FROM MY LOAN-MARKED BUTT.



THEN, THE WOODS-ER LAUGHED HIMSELF INTO NOCTURNALNESS. I FROTH MYSELF, GRIPPING THON AIR WHERE A HEAVY BROWBROWED, ONLY BEGONES BEFORE, HAD REPOSED.



I COULD SCARCELY BELIEVE THAT I WAS NOT DEAD... YET. NO PHYSICAL EVIDENCE OF AN ATTACKER HAD MANGLED. I COULD ONLY CONCLUDE THAT I HAD FALLEN VICTIM TO A FEVERISH, INSANE NIGHTMARE!

THERE WAS NO SWORD CUT ON MY TYPING MACHINE... NO WOUND DIRECTING MY PALPITATING HEART. I EXPLAINED THE INCIDENT AS AN AN-100-YEAR DREAM.



AS I TYPED WEARILY TO BED, I WAS ONLY REMOTELY AWARE THAT THE ATTIC DOOR WAS AHEAD... GRADUALLY AS I HAD EARLIER, LEFT.

WITH THE DAWN, I REMEMBERED THE PREVIOUS NIGHT'S HAUNTING. I SCOTCHED AND UNPAID CABBAGES CURBED THE PATES FOR ALLOWING ME PERENNIAL BACHELORHOOD.



AN AMPLY ENDOWED WIFE WOULD HAVE BEEN MOST WELCOME TO ASSIST IN THE UNPAID. I WAS ANGRY TO RETURN TO MY ROOM. NO DREAM OF THE PREVIOUS NIGHT HAD INSPIRED SEVERAL NEW TWISTS I WISHED TO INCORPORATE INTO THE STORY.

THAT EVENING, I UNKIDLED MY NOVEL WITH RENEWED VIGOR. THE STORY WAS COMING ALONG NICKY, WHEN A UTILE BEFORE MIDNIGHT, MY HANDS SUDDENLY CEASED TO FUNCTION.



IT HAD HAPPENED BEFORE, YET IT WAS ALWAYS A FRUSTRATING, RESENTING EXPERIENCE. MY BRAIN FIGURATIVELY HUNG OVER, DEFEATED AND COMMENCED DREAMING OUT MY EARS. AND I REALIZED THAT FURTHER THOUGHTS OF WRITING WERE POINTLESS.

AS I SAT, LEFT IN A LUNGOLY TENSENESS DIVERGENT, I HEARD FOR THE FIRST TIME... SOUNDS EMANATING FROM THE VICINITY ATTIC ABOVE ME.

TAP TAP TAP
THUMP!



THE TAPPING GAVE FIBER PLAYFUL MICE, I THOUGHT. THEN CAME THE HEAVY FOOTFALLS. THINGS OF PLAYFUL MICE VANISHED... I WAS NOW CERTAIN THAT AN UNKNOWN CREATURE OF AT LEAST TWO HUNDRED POUNDS STALKED THE ATTIC ABOVE ME.

I VAGUELY HEARD THE FOOTFALLS RESEND THE CREAKY ATTIC STEPS. I RACED, BLOOD-DRENCHED FEAR AWAKENING MY DREAMS BEAN... FOR THE NIGHT- STAND AND THE NO AUTOMATIC I KEPT THERE.



THE CREAKING STAIRS WERE SILENT BY THE TIME I REACHED THE ATTIC DOOR. THE POUNDING WITHIN MY CHEST SLOWED. I ATTAINED A SEMI-RATIONAL CALM AS I STOOP TO ONE SIDE OF THE FEARFUL DOOR.



THEN, IT BEGAN, THE BREATHING SLOW, HEAVY, THUNDERING. SHANATING FROM BEHIND TWO INCHES OF FRAGILE, BRITTLE WOOD.



I GRIEVED BY AUTOMATIC, APPREHENSIVELY WAITING FOR THE THUD. THE KICKER. THE MONSTER... THE DEAD THING LURKING IN THE DARKNESS, TO SPLINTER THE DOOR IN A MAD, SAVANAGE POUNCE.

THE LONGER I WAITED, THE MORE UNDESIRABLE I ENVISAGED THE THING BEYOND THE DOOR TO BE. FINALLY I PLACED ONE HAND FIRMLY AROUND THE DOORKNOB. THE FINGER OF MY REMAINING HAND STRAINED AGAINST THE GUN.



THERE, AS SUDDENLY AS IT BEGAN, THE BREATHING CEASED. I PULSED HALF EXPECTING MY MONSTROUS INTRUDER TO HAVE VANISHED.

MY BULLETHOLE EFFORT FILLED LUNGS, I YARNED THE FLOOR WIDE, AND TO MY HORROR, AN INSANE BLACK KNUCKLE BURST UPON ME, SENDING ME SPRAWLING TO THE HARD WOODEN FLOOR.



I FLEW RIGHT INTO THE NIGHTMARE'S CHESTPLATE METAL SCREAMED AGAINST METAL, AND TIME AND LIFE APPEARED IN THE BROW BEAM. IT WAS WONDER THE 45 SHELLS SHOULD HAVE RIPPED THE METAL INTO SCRAP.



I REEP AGAIN... AGAIN... UNTIL MY CLIP WAS EMPTY, AND STILL THE NIGHTMARE THING CAME AT ME, HIS FACE GRIMING, HIS FISTS THUNDER THUNDERING THROUGHOUT THE MANSER.

TWENTY ROUNDS OF STEEL FLASHED AS THE NIGHTMARE WHIRLED IN A VICIOUS ARC LIKE A WORM, I BULTERED BACKWARDS, TRYING DESPERATELY TO ESCAPE THE MONSTRIOUS AFFLICTION.



TWO LIGHTS BURNED FEROCESLY THROUGH HIS BLACK VISOR, HUMMING, DEAFENING MY VERY SOUL. THERE WAS LITTLE I COULD DO TO AVOID HAVING MY HEAD PERMANENTLY HANDLED BY A RABBIT MACE.



THE WEAPON SMASHED THROUGH MY NOSE WITH A THOUSAND POUNDS OF CENTE CALIBER PRESSURE. FORTUNATELY... IT KEPT GOING. I COULD HEAR A MELLOW THROBBING SOUND AS IT REVERBERATED OFF THE WALL BEHIND MY HEAD.



FLUNGED AWARDS, I REALIZED I HAD BEEN OUTWITTED. HORRIFIED I BLANCED AT THE RUINED CLIP DOWN ONLY TO SEE HIM LAUGHING... LAUGHING... DEEPLY... HIS DEEP, THROTTLY THUNDERING LAUGH.



AND THEN... SLOWLY, DISTINCTLY, HE DISAPPEARED IN DOTTING WAFTS OF MIST.

I WAS LEFT ALONE, SITTING, SHEDDING IN THE BACKSTAGE CORRIDOR, SOBBING SOFTLY TO THE WHITE WALLS ABOUT ME.



HE HAD REFUSED TO ACCEPT THAT WHICH FAIRY HAD FLURTY THIRST UPON ME. MY FIRST EXPLANATION WAS OVERWHELMING, WELTERING AND, BY NATURE, CREATIVE...IMAGINATIVE CREATIVES, MY LIFE HAD, INDEED, BEEN AN UNBROKEN CHAIN OF WANDERLUST DAYDREAMS, BUT NEVER...*EVER* HAD I DREAMT MORE VIVID REALITIES. IT SEEMED FRIGHTENING AND UPSET ME DEEPLY, AND I KNEW THAT THE ELUSIVE EXPLANATION FOR MY AFFLICTION MUST SURELY LIE IN MY MIND.

I PASSED A FITFUL, SLEEPLESS SECOND NIGHT WITH MY NEW ADOBS, YET THE REMAINS PASSED UNEVENTFULLY, SAVE FOR MY OWN CREEPING *FEARS*.



THE NEXT MORNING FOUND ME IN THE VILLAGE, EAGERLY AWAITING THE ARRIVAL OF THE TOWN PHYSICIAN.



I RELATED TO HIM THE PREVIOUS NIGHT'S EVENTS, ELABORATING UPON MY SUSPICIONS THAT OVERWHELMING MIGHT BE HAVING AN HALLUCINATING EFFECT UPON ME. THE MAN SEEMED MORE *ALARMED* THAN CONCERNED.

HE KNEW, OF COURSE, THAT I WAS THE NEW DEBUTANT OF THE DOWNYARD BOOBY MANOR. AND HE KNEW, AND WAS WILLING TO REVEAL, I COULD

THE PREVIOUS INCIDENT OF MY HOME, PHINEAS BOODS HAD BEEN ONE OF HIS REGULAR PATIENTS. THAT THE MAN HAD PASSED ON IN THE GOOD DOCTOR'S CARE WAS NO REFLECTION ON HIS HEALING ABILITIES. HE BOODS HAD BEEN NINETEEN YEARS OF AGE.



BOODS HAD BEEN AN ACTOR OF SORTS, WHO HAD OBTAINED BIT PARTS IN A MODDY NUMBER OF RECENT FILMS. YES, THE RESEMBLANCE OF "TALKER" BOODS BOODS FURIOUS CAREER.



THE ACTOR'S HIGH-PITCHED, ANXIOUS STRENGTHFUL VOICE WAS LUDICROUS IN A MAN OF HIS MARCH-LIKE, OLIVIAN STATURE. ACTING ARRANGEMENTS WERE MORE AN NOISE DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN. BOODS TURNED TO STUNT WORK TO REMAIN IN THE MOTION PICTURE INDUSTRY HE HAD COME TO CRASH.

BOODS EXCELLED AT HIS WORK, AND IN TIME, LAMPED CRITIC EYES. HE, NOT REGULAR PAINTER, BE SCARED FURIOUS, REPERCUSS BY HEAVING, HORSE AND ALL, OFF A HIGHWATER BUILDING IN THE ARMS OF BOODS. HE STEPPED INTO THE PANDEOUS SCENE FOR BOODS. FLYING IN THE SEA MARK.

NEVERTHELESS, BOODS' HOLLYWOOD CAREER WAS SUCCESSFUL AND LUCRATIVE. BUT AROUND REFLECTED SOME THING TOLL. DURING THE FILMING OF *BOON TOWN*, BOODS, FEIGNING A DEATH INTENDED FOR CLARK GABLE, REMOVED HIS HAIR A DOZEN KISS, AN ARM AND TWO LEGS, WHEN HE COLLIDED WITH SEVERAL ALL-TOO-REAL PARTNERS.



HAD PHINEAS BOODS POSSESSED A HEEDING VOICE, HIS REALISTIC PORTRAYAL OF THE WILE BLACK KNIGHT, THE FORTITUDE ONE OUT OF THE BOURNINE AND THE SILENT SQUAD OF CHRISTMAS PAST WOULD HAVE ACCESSED HIM STAR STATUS.



SHORTLY THEREAFTER, BOODS *BETTER* AND PURCHASED THE HOME. I NOW CALL ME OWN.

THE GOOD DOCTOR AND BOB-BE BECAME INSTANTLY ACQUAINTED DURING THE MANY OFFICIAL VISITS PAID TO THE OLD WANTS HOME. THEY CONVINCED UNBESILLY AS BOB-BE BLENDER IN HIS FAILED HOLLYWOOD EXPLOITS.



PHINEAS LONG CLAIMED THAT IF THERE WAS A TRICKY PART OF THE TRUTH, HE WOULD FIND IT IN MUCH THE SAME MANNER IN WHICH HE HAD LIVED, ENACTING THE RULES OF WHICH HE FELT SO FOND.

I SAT BEFORE THE MIRROR, STUNNED BY MY FANTASTIC REVELATION. I GAZED AT THE DOCTOR FURTHER, ESPECIALLY INTERESTED IN HIS EYES, AS THE DISCREET ACTING MAN-BODIED ANY ALL-WILL TOWARDS FELLOW MEN... ON THREE HONORABLE WHO INHABITED HIS HOME.



PAINE, THE DOCTOR ASSURED ME, WAS UNKNOWN TO HIS FUTURE. I WAS ENTICED COMPATIBLE, IF I WERE NEEDED PHINEAS BOB-BE WOULD APPEAR TO ME NIGHTLY. HE HAD TO BE PURELY TO ENTERTAIN NOT TO FRIGHTEN.

THE DOCTOR WAS NATURALLY COURAGEOUS TO SEE HIS DECREASED COMEDY AND ASKED IF HE MIGHT JOIN ME THAT NIGHT IN THE HOTEL THAT PHINEAS BOB-BE WOULD APPEAR AFTER.



OVERLOOKED AT THE PROSPECT OF AN EVENING'S COMPANY, I WENTED THE DOCTOR FOURTH WITH.

THAT NIGHT THE DOCTOR AND I WANDERED SURVEILLER IN MY STUDY, I THING YAMMERS TO LOOK AT BASS, BUT MY FEEL WAS INTERESTING TO THE DOCTOR'S REMOTE COMPANY.



THE NIGHT FEELER UNIDENTICAL, THE DOCTOR WAS PREPARING HIS LEAVE, WHEN THE BELLS OF THE TOWN'S CHURCH TOLLED MIDNIGHT. AND, AS THE LAST CHIME STRUCK, THERE CAME THE UNMISTAKABLE SOUND OF IMPROVISED FROM WITHIN THE ATTIC ABOVE OUR HEADS.

A WICKED GIGGLE DANCED IN THE GOOD DOCTOR'S EYE, AND A JOVIAL, IMPISH GRIN PLAYED ACROSS HIS CRABBY FEATURES. HIS DEVOTED, ANTICIPATION WAXED HIGH.



I SUPPRESSED MY PHINEAS FOOTSTEPS PLOTTED HEAVY DOWN THE CRABBY ATTIC STOPS, BUT NEARLY STRANDED AS HEAVY BREATHING COMMENCED ON THE FAR SIDE OF THE ATTIC DOOR.

BREATHLESSLY, I WHISPERED TO THE PHINEAS TO EXPECT NOTHING UNTIL ONE OF US WAS SEVERE ENOUGH TO SWING THE DOOR OPEN. THE PHYSICIAN CHUCKLED THAT IT WAS LIKE PHINEAS TO DEMAND A DREAMATIC ENTRANCE.



BEFORE I COULD STOP HIM, THE DOCTOR STRODE SWIFTLY TO THE TERRIBLE DOOR, AND SWINGING IT WIDE, IN A GRAND WELCOMEING GESTURE, WAS SENT SPRAWLING OVER HIS BACK.

A BLACK BACED FIGURE ROUNDED FROM THE STAIRWELL ABOVE, AN EYES STRUCK, BOTH NOSES AND BODIES TURNING WILDLY OVER THE SPRAWLED DOCTOR'S FORM. AHA! AND GREATER TUMBLER SPREADS DOWN THE NARROW CORRIDOR, LAUGHING INSTANTLY AND THE WORLD.



THE DOCTOR SOMEHOW MANAGED TO CHUCKLE FORTH TWO UNDERSTANDABLE WORDS AND AT HIS NEXT STOP HEARTILY: *EL SECCO!*

THE NOISE WAS SCARCELY UPON ALL FLOORS WHEN IT STRAIGHT FOR ME? I TURNED AND SAW THE DOCTOR SAT UPRIGHT, COOING UNCOMFORTABLY, TO HIM. THIS WAS THE GREATEST OF SPORT.



I SAW, FIST... THE BEAN CORPS AND EYES LEFT PHINEAS HE... GLIDING SMOOTH, GRACEFULLY INTO THE AIR... ONLY TO DISAPPEAR BEFORE THEY TOUCHED DOWN AT THE FAR END OF THE CORRIDOR.

FOR SOME MOMENTS, WE SAT IN THE DARK CARPETED HALLWAY. HE LAUGHED IN A MUTE ... I, MYSELF, UNABLE TO SUPPRESS THE SMILE THAT FOAM ... ITS WIFE TO MY LIFE.



THE DOCTOR THANKED ME FOR A WONDERFUL EVENING'S ENTERTAINMENT, AND ASKED IF HE MIGHT COME ANOTHER TIME. I ASSURED HIM, HE WOULD BE A MOST WELCOME GUEST UPON THE CHIMES OF ANY AND ALL MIDNIGHT HOURS.

IT HAS BEEN A FULL YEAR SINCE I TOOK UP RESIDENCE WITH THIS FASCINATINGLY ENTERTAINING GHOST, THOUGH MOST NIGHTS I HAVE BEEN TREATED TO A MOST ASTONISHING EDITION...

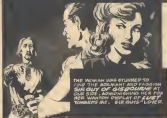


I AM DEEPENLY AMAZED AT THE MANY AND VARIOUS CUES IN WHICH MY HOST APPEARS. ONCE, WHILE ENTERTAINING A YOUNG LADY CRIMINAL FOR THE EVENING, I LEFT THE ATTIC ROOM ALONE INADVERTENTLY.

THERE HAVE BEEN TIMES WHEN EVEN THE MOST JOYFUL COMPANION HAS UNEXPECTEDLY, ON THESE OCCASIONS, I HAVE WAITED FOR THE FOOT FALLS TO END AND THE HEAVY PEEPING TO CEASE, AND I HAVE NOT OPENED THE DOOR.



OWN AND UNCONSCIOUSLY, I HAVE INEVITABLY OVERTAKEN ME AND I TRY TO MAKE UP FOR MY RESENTMENT THE FOLLOWING EVENING, BY RESPONDING TO THE HOST'S CALLS ENTHUSIASTICALLY AND BARELY-INTOXICATED.



THE WOMAN WAS STUNNED TO FIND THE ADMIRAL AND FASHION SLEAZE OUT OF DISGUISE AT ONE SIDE, ADMIRING HIS FOR BEING A MAN OF LETTERS, AND AT THE OTHER, A BIRD-SHIRT-LIVER.

ON CHRISTMAS EVE, I WAS TREATED TO A VISIT FROM THE CHAIN-SMOKING GHOST OF *CHARLES DICKENS*, FIRST, OLD FASHIONED DICKENS PROUD.



ACCOMMODATED AS I WAS TO MY NIGHTLY VISITOR, I WAS STILL CHILLED TO THE BONE AT THE SIGHT OF MY PERSONAL EFFECTS ENACTING THE ROLE OF A GHOST.

HAVING A RESIDENT HAUNT HAS BEEN AN INTERESTING EXPERIENCE. TO SAY THE LEAST, FRIENDS BOSS' VINTS HAVE APPRECIATED MY WRITINGS TREMENDOUSLY — GRANTED ME MORE FLAIR AND ENTHUSIASM FOR CHILL-OTIC SURPRISE.



I COMPLETED MY NOVEL, *BARBARIE THE HAMMERS* GHOST, MY FUSHER LOVED IT. EVEN NOW IT IS OUTSTANDING ALL MY OTHER NOVELS GAINED. YET I AM EVEN MORE ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT MY NEW BOOK.



THE PLOT INVOLVES A WRITER WHO PURCHASED AN ANTI-VICTORIAN MANSE ... ONLY TO FIND IT HAUNTED BY AN ENTHUSIASTIC, ENTERTAINING, AND SOMEWHAT SHOWOFF GHOST.

END

THE COMIC BOOKS

By Joe Brancatelli

There is an unvarnished truth about the comic-book business that disturbs me as a practicing writer interested in the success of well-written material, frightens me as a charter member of the quality-sells-itself school, concerns me as a dyed-in-the-dollar capitalist and scares the hell out of me as a comic-book fan.

The unvarnished truth is a simple one: Comic books could develop into the most creative medium in the art world and still go the way of *Collier's*, or *Life* or *Look* or any defunct magazine.

Many of the sharper people in the industry have known for years that the key to the survival of the comic book lies not solely in artistic creativity, but in the effective utilization of the nation's notoriously poor distribution network.

Along with just about every other consumer magazine in circulation today, comic books suffer from very poor distribution from publisher to eventual buyer. The labyrinth that is the nation's distribution system has been teetering on the brink of total collapse for dozens of years, certainly unable to bear the brunt of lackadaisical publishers, inefficient national distributors and monopolistic local independents. And while some magazines in the narrow special interest field can survive and occasionally prosper within the creaking system, the high-volume, low-profit nature of the comic-book business is being ripped apart.

In simplest terms, every comic book ever published could be on a par with *Hamlet*, but it will never sell because the distribution system has broken down.

Barring a monumental act of the elusive god of publishing guile—or a concerned, multi-billion dollar magazine industry drive—we're stuck with the system as it now exists. However, there is an effective and tested way for the comic-book industry to deal with some of the problems and, if nothing

else, stave off a disastrous, short-range collapse of sales.

One remedy for the crumbling system—the one that could quickly and cheaply be grafted onto the comic world—was stumbled upon years ago by Genevieve Pope, the prosperous and cunning publisher of *The National Enquirer*. Possibly the least credible—but most widely read—weekly periodical in the world, *TNE* still runs the Pope formula to give it the circulation edge over his two groupies—concomitantly, the schlocky *National Star* and *Time*, Inc.'s light, airy and superfluous *Pulse*.

Basically, Pope employs his own 900-person staff of part-time and full-time employees, all with the sole task of making sure that *The National Enquirer* is well represented on the nation's retail periodical racks. While *TNE*, like every fast-selling magazine, is distributed by a major national company which specializes in periodical dissemination, Pope long ago saw the need for in-house employees to service retailers directly.

Best of all, the system works. *The National Enquirer* sells about 5 million copies a week at 39 cents each—an incredible 260 million copies a year. And, according to *Good Housekeeping* editor John Mack Carter, the retail-check system spells the difference between *TNE* and dozens of other competing weekly gossip tabloids.

Writing in *Folio*, the magazine of magazine management, the well-respected and powerful Carter said "The importance of this regular policing has been proven in terms of (retail) displays left without checkups. The weekly sale of copies without any checkup falls 40 per cent."

Pope, Carter continued, has a dream of selling 80 per cent of all the copies he prints (most magazines are profitable at the 45 per cent mark, while a 50 per cent sale is considered exceptional). "This is not an impossible dream," Carter concludes,

"as (*National Enquirer*) sales have gone as high as 89 per cent and rarely fall as low as 70 per cent."

The understanding of the significance of Pope's retail checking system, it is necessary to understand how comic books and other magazines get from the publisher to you. After a magazine is published, it is usually sent directly from the printer to a string of local "independent distributors" who have agreed to distribute the book under contract with a "national distributor." Since most local distributors have a geographic monopoly (developed gradually through the years and presently being contested in the court system), he not only receives almost all the magazines published, he gets all the comic books published by National, Marvel, Charlton, Gold Key, Harvey, Archie and Warren.

As you might suspect, neither he nor his string of retailers can adequately merchandise all the magazines and all the comics. More often than not, many books get lost in the shuffle, never leave the distributor's warehouse or never make it from the retailer's bundle to his limited display space. Moreover, since comic books offer both independent distributors and retailers an embarrassingly poor profit when compared to more prestigious books like *Time*, *Playboy*, *Esquire*, *Cosmopolitan* or the others, the four-color chapies are most often left behind.

In 1974, when I was on a cross-country assignment for the Gannett newspaper chain, I surveyed 50 independent distributors, and it was their consensus that only about one comic book in four printed actually reaches the retail shelves.

Naturally, even if the comic book is the greatest thing since sliced bread creatively, the distribution snafus almost surely guarantee dreadful sales.

Since they are the most severely affected publishers, the nation's com-

ic-book producers would be wise to institute Pope's system for their own protection. Unlike Pope, they wouldn't even have to pay people to do their checking. There are thousands of fans across the country who would gladly volunteer to check orders—wanda, if for no other reason than to assure that they themselves can purchase the comic book they want when it is published. Should some far-sighted publisher be as generous as to offer his volunteer checkers a bonus in the way of free merchandise, he would assure a rabid loyalty and devotion to retail-checking heretofore unknown in business circles.

The advantages are obvious for both the publisher and the fan, as well as the distributor. For the publisher, once aware of which retail outlets are undersupplied, oversupplied or badly supplied, he can act to rectify the situation quickly, improve his sales markedly—and possibly even keep his job when the stockholders ask him what he's done for them lately. For the fan, he has the satisfaction of knowing the comic-book business needs him as well as just his dollars, and he is also assured of a relatively even flow of comic books. And for the distributor (and retailer), they have an opportunity to increase their own flagging profits and have eager-beaver—unpaid—volunteers doing the work they should have done a long time ago.

Heaven forbid, but the damn thing makes sense. No wonder the only comic-book attempt at a similar system (in 1971), National's DC Survey Club, went down in flames due to corporate deceit, stupidity and neglect.

If only Genevieve Pope published comic books.

Joe Brancatelli, a long-time comic-book fan and collector, is an editor and reporter at Fairchild Publications, the nation's largest chain of business newspapers.

I PULL INTO MY DRIVEWAY AND CUT THE ENGINE. I SIT THERE **ALONE** FOR A MOMENT, BEGAINING QUETLY, HESITANT TO LEAVE THE SANCTITY AND SOLITUDE AN AUTOMOBILE CAN OFFER. MY RIGHT HAND, I NOTICE, IS **TREMBLING** SLIGHTLY.



MY EYES **FOCUS** ON THE SLUR-BAKER WOOD OF THE GARAGE DOOR. ABSENTLY, I REMEMBER GWIN ASKING ME TO **PAINT** IT. I PULL IN A RAGGED BREATH. IT WILL **NEVER** GET PAINTED NOW.

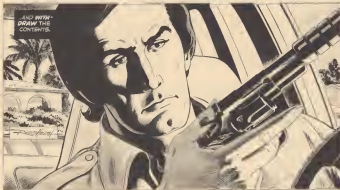


MY THROAT MOVES CONVULSIVELY. THE DULL BEGINNINGS OF A **HEAD-ACHE** PECK AT THE BASE OF MY SKULL. I NEED A **DRINK**.

"OUT SITTING HERE **THINKING**," MY MIND SAYS. "THIS LOOKS **SUSPICIOUS**." I REACH OUT MY HAND CAREFULLY TO THE GLOVE COMPARTMENT AND OPEN IT. MY FINGERS **HESITATE** A MOMENT, THEN REACH INSIDE.



...AND WITH-
DRAW THE
CONTENTS.



Process of elimination

I SLIP THE .45 QUICKLY INTO MY TROUSERS, AND SWING OPEN THE DOOR. THE NIGHT WALK FEELS ALIEN UNDER MY FEET...IT'S SOMEONE ELSE'S SHOES I'M WALKING IN. I'M ASLEEP. I'M DREAMING...



I NEARLY COLLIDE WITH RICHARD'S ROCKET TRINE. ANOTHER EVENING I WOULD WALK AROUND IT, CONFRONT RICKY LATER AND GIVE HIM A LECTURE. TONIGHT I PLACE IT CAREFULLY...LOWKEY ON THE GRASS BESIDE ME.



MY HANDS TREMBLE VIOLENTLY AGAIN AS I REACH FOR THE DOOR-KNOB. THE WORLD GOES SLOPPENLY WHITE. A WEDGE OF PAIN PIVOTS INTO MY STOMACH. I CAN'T DO THIS. I CAN'T! I CLOSE MY EYES TIGHT, GRITTING MY TEETH, TRYING TO CONJURE UP IMAGES OF HADES, TRYING TO FIND INNER STRENGTH.

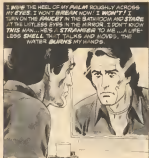


THE MOMENT PASSES. I FORCE ANOTHER BREATH AND ENTER THE HOUSE. THE GUN IS A LEAD BRICK AGAINST MY STOMACH.



GWYN MOVES CLOSE FOR A KISS. MY HEART NEARLY TUMBLES THROUGH MY CHEST--THE GUN! SHE'LL FEEL THE PROTRUDING BULK OF THE--









IT'S OVER. I'VE DONE IT. SHE'S GONE, AND INCREDIBLY MY FIRST THOUGHTS AREN'T OF REMORSE OR GUILT OR SHAME... IT'S THE TERRIBLE RECOGNITION OF THE AWFUL POWER I FEEL... TO BE ABLE TO SWUFF OUT A HUMAN LIFE THAT SIMPLY!



RICKY! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE AT THE KLIMTRICKS!

JERRY GOT SICK... THEY SENT ME HOME. IS MOMMY SICK TOO?



MOMMY'S... MOMMY'S JUST RESTING.

YOU GO UPSTAIRS AND GET READY FOR BED. I'LL BE UP IN A MINUTE...

I LOOK AT MY MURDER DESPITELY WISE. WILL BE HAUNTING FOR ME. RICKY SHOULD HAVE BEEN IN BED BY NOW. I HAVEN'T WANTED TO DO IT LIKE THIS...



...BUT... IT LEAST HE'D COME HOME ON HIS OWN, THAT WAS A BREAK. OTHERWISE I'D HAVE TO HAVE GONE TO THE KLIMTRICKS MYSELF AND GOTTEN HIM. THAT WOULD HAVE MADE ME ALL THE LATER.



WILL YOU TELL ME A STORY TONIGHT?

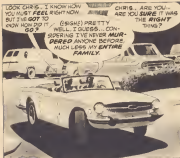
HAVE YOU BRUSHED YOUR TEETH?

OH... ANYTHING...



...AND I KNOW
THE ANSWER.









I STILL HAVE
IT ARE YOU SURE,
HONEY?

I'M SURE! OH GOD,
I'M SORRY! DO YOU
HATE ME, CHRIS? ARE
YOU DISAPPOINTED BE-
CAUSE I'M NOT AS
STRONG AS YOU
THOUGHT?

I'M NOT DIS-
APPOINTED
MADGE.

SECRETLY I
THINK I ALWAYS
KNEW YOU WERE
A LOT LIKE
GWINN...



THAT'S GOOD, OH
THAT'S GOOD!

ALL RIGHT,
CHRIS... I'M
READY...



SNIK!



I LOOK AT MY WATCH. IT'S JUST SIX-THIRTY. I LEAN
BACK HEAVILY INTO THE SOFT UPHOLSTERY. THE
STRANGER IS GONE. I AM WHOLE AGAIN.



WELL...ONE THING
FOR SURE... I GOT THE
BEST SEAT IN TOWN...



END

COUNTRY PIE

"I SEE THE VICTIM NOW... I SEE THE VICTIM, SHERIFF... THE KILLER IS APPROACHING RAPIDLY ON... ON A COUNTRY ROAD SOMEWHERE... CLOSE BY... FAIRLY CLOSE BY... BUT I CAN'T QUITE DEFINE IT YET..."

"BUT TAKE YOUR TIME, MRS. WHITNEY... THIS IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT. TRY TO DESCRIBE THE LANDSCAPE AROUND THE SCENE... WE NEED THAT INFORMATION VERY BADLY..."



"THE KILLER IS STOPPING... CAN'T GET A CLEAR IMAGE OF THE FACE, BUT HE'S YOUNG... YOUNGER THAN I'D HAVE THOUGHT... HE IS LOOKING AT THE VICTIM... FEVER IN HIS EYES... THE VICTIM SMILES UNWITTINGLY..."

"HI, THERE! NOT DAY!"

"SAY, WHICH WAY IS CLIFTON?... I SEEM TO HAVE LOST MY WAY..."

"CLIFTON'S BACK THATAWAY, MISTER. YER ALL TURNED AROUND."



"REALLY? IMAGINE THAT!"

"HOW WOULD YOU AND YOUR LITTLE BROTHER LIKE A LIFT... LONG AS I'M HEADED THAT WAY..."









WE'RE ALL ALONE OUT HERE... NOW ABOUT SHOWING YOUR GRATITUDE FOR THE LIFT WITH A LITTLE KISS?



"THE KILLER IS BECOMING AROUSED! HE IS ABOUT TO STRIKE! ... I CAN FEEL IT...!"

JAKE, HURRY FOR CHRIST'S SAKE!



PLEASE, MISTER... AM I EXPECTED HOME SOON NOW...

JUST ONE MORE KISS... HERE ON YOUR THROAT... SUCH A WARM, SOFT THROAT... SO PALE... SO DELICATE...



THE KILLER HAS STRUCK! THE KILLER HAS STRUCK! -- WE'RE TOO LATE!

DAMN IT, JAKE!

BUT WE'RE HERE, SHERIFF! I DON'T SEE ANYBODY!



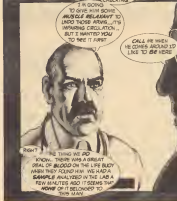


ORDER CREEPY BACK ISSUES!



ALL
CREEPY
STORIES
WILL
HAVE
YOU
GLUED
TO
THE
EDGE OF
YOUR
SEAT!

LOOK AT ALL OF THOSE MAGNIFICENT COVERS! EVERY MAGAZINE IS WORTH HAVING FOR THOSE FULL-COLOR WORKS OF ART THEMSELVES! BUT WHAT ABOUT THE GORY INTERIORS? EACH GRUESOME TALE IS BETTER THAN THE NEXT! "THE DAMNED THING" BY GRAY MORROW. "RUDE AWAKENING" BY ALEX TOTI. EANDO BINDER'S "ADAM LINK" SERIES, ILLUSTRATED BY JOE ORLANDO. "BEAST MAN" BY STEVE DITKO. GAN ADKIN'S "THE BECKONING BEYOND." NEAL ADAM'S "THE TERROR BEYOND TIME." REMEMBER JEFF JONES' "ANGEL OF DOOM?" TOM SUTTON'S "IMAGE OF WAX?" HOW ABOUT JERRY GRANDETTE? HE DREW "TYPE CAST" AND "VOODOO DOLL." DID YOU ENJOY FELIX MAS' GREAT "CLIMBERS OF THE TOWER?" AND HOW ABOUT WALLY WOOD'S "THE COSMIC ALL?" DID YOU LIKE JOSE BEA'S "LIKE A PHONE BOOTH, LONG AND NARROW?" EVERY CREEPY ISSUE IS A COMIC COLLECTOR'S MUST! DON'T MISS OUT!





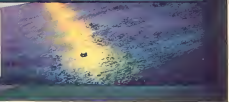
AS IN A DREAM... A MONTAGE OF SLOW-MOTION DELIRIUM—HE SWITCHED THE TRIP LITTLE OR YET SWIFTER SLOWLY BEHIND THE ROLLING WAVES. ALL THEIR PLANNING, ALL THE SAVINGS, ALL THEIR FUTURE... TORTUROUSLY DISAPPEARING IN SILENT RESIGNMENT TO THE SLOW POTTING.

YET THIS WAS REALITY. THIS WAS THE FUTURE. PERHAPS ALL THE FUTURE THEY WOULD EVER KNOW HE LOOKED ACROSS THE LINE BARS AT PEGGY AND FELT THE FIRST REAL WAVE OF FEAR DRIVE INTO HIS HEART...?

UNTIL NOW THERE HADN'T BEEN SOME FOR FEAR. ONLY A SORT OF AWKWARD URGENCY TO HAVE THE RIGHT DECISIONS. EITHER THE RIGHT AND TERRIBLE. BECAUSE THE BOAT WAS GONE IN THE END THERE WAS HARDLY TIME EVEN FOR THAT...!



HANGING HERE NOW IN THE DARK ROOMING WHERE THERE WAS AT LAST THE CHANCE TO PUT THEIR SITUATION IN PERSPECTIVE... AND THE PLANNING WAS MORE CLEAR CUT. ENCLOSE GREEN SEA BELOW THEM BUT SKY ABOVE THE DREADFUL, INCONCEIVABLE CERTAINTY OF IT SETTLED OVER HIM.



"THEY'LL FIND US," HE SAID, NOT BELIEVING IT, NOT LETTING THE DISBELIEF SHOW IN HIS VOICE. AND THE SMALL, CALM CONVICTION OF HER VERY ALMOST BROUGHT TEARS TO HIS EYES IN THE WISTFULNESS OF THEIR FUTILITY. "OF COURSE THEY WILL..."

HE CAME ABOUT POLITELY FOR SOME KIND OF **EXCUSE**. THERE WAS NONE THERE, HADN'T BEEN TIME TO GRAB EVEN A **BLANKET** OR **SHIRT**. THE BOAT HAD GONE DOWN LIKE A **ROCK**. HE CAUGHT HER LOOKING AT HIM. "WHY **SWIFT**," SHE SAID.

HE LOOKED AT HIS **WATCH**. ID OL. THE SUN WOULD BE **FULL STRENGTH** IN A COUPLE OF HOURS. THAT WOULD BE THEIR **Worst** PROBLEM. IF **URGENT**, THE BOTTLE OF **GINGER ALE** HE'D MANAGED TO GRAB SHOULD LAST THEM TWO OR **THREE** DAYS. BUT THE SUN

HE SMILED AT HER AND REALIZED SUDDENLY HOW MUCH **WORK** THERE COULD BE FOR THEM WITHOUT EITHER OF THE OTHERS THERE FOR **COMPANY**. HE HOOKED AROUND THE RING AND **UNZIPPED** THE SHIRT FROM HER WAIST. "I LOVE YOU," HE THOUGHT.

LOOKING ONE ARM ABOUT THE RING, HE **TOOK** THE **QUINQUAGENARIAN** MATERIAL, IN **HAIR** AND **SHIRT** PART OF IT OVER HIS HEAD AND **SHOULDER**—THE OTHER HALF OVER HIS OWN. IT WAS **WET** AND **HEAVY** OUT OF THE WATER, BUT WOULD **PROTECT** THEM FROM THE **SUN'S** RAYS. HE WONDERED **IMMEDIATELY** HOW **GOLD** IT WOULD GET AT NIGHT.

FRIGID COULDN'T **SHOW**. THE FACT WAS **UPPERMOST** IN HIS MIND THE **MOMENT** THEY'D **ABANDONED** SHIRT. HIS VERY FIRST THOUGHT HAD BEEN TO **LASH** HER ARMS AND WAIST TO THE RING, ANTICIPATING THE **ESSENTIAL** NEED FOR **SLEEP**. MOVING ABOUT **NOW** ON THE SUPPERY RING, HE WAS GLAD HE'D THOUGHT TO BRING THE **CORP**.



HE KNEW THIRST WOULD COME QUICKLY BUT HE'D HOPED NOT AS SOON AS THIS. BY TWO O'CLOCK HE COULD WAIT NO LONGER. TOSSEY HADN'T COMPLAINED BUT HE'D CAUGHT HER LAPPING HER PALE DRY LIPS... SAW HER SWALLOWING WITH HIM AS DREW UP THE GINGER ALE...

ONE SMALL SWALLOW IT WAS MADDENING NOT TO DRINK IT QUICKLY. HIS HEART WENT OUT TO HER BUT HE RECAPPED THE BOTTLE. HE SCANNED THE HORIZON FOR THE HUNDREDETH TIME FOR SOME SIGN OF A SHIP. FOR THE HUNDREDETH TIME HE SAW ONLY WATER. HIS ARMS ACHED.



THEY TOLD STORIES, JOKES, MODLIES... LAUGHED ABOUT DRINKING IN THEIR CLOTHES. HE RESOAKED THE SHORT KILVES SEVERAL TIMES AND UNTIED HER OFTEN TO KEEP HER BLOOD CIRCULATING. THEY WAITED. THE SUN DIPPED TOWARD THE SEA. THEY SUPPED MORE GINGER ALE. THEY WAITED. RAINBOW DANCED AT THEM MORE FREQUENTLY. THEY WAITED.

NIGHT HE HAD NEVER SEEN SO MANY STARS. BLISSFULLY THE AFTER REMAINED WARM. THEY TALKED LESS. IT MADE THEM THIRSTY. SHE ALIASED "MOON RIVER." THE RING ROCKED ROCKED. HE CRUGHT HIMSELF ADDING HE BIT HIS LIP TO STAY AWAKE. SHE CHILED TIREDLY.



THEY COUNTED SHOOTING STARS. THEY THOUGHT ABOUT THE MISTRESS OF THE HEAVENS. IT WAS COMFORTING TO LOOK STRAIGHT UP AND SEE NOTHING BUT STARS... SOMETHING YOU COULD DO ON YOUR OWN BACK. FORCH. THEY THOUGHT OF HOME. HER HEAD BOUNDED REPEATEDLY. HE WATCHED SWELING, AS SHE GAVE IN TO SLEEP.



HE HADN'T PRAYED SINCE HE WAS TEN. HE DID SO NOW WITHOUT SHAM RAGS. MINT. THEN HE WATCHED HER A LONG WHILE. SHE LOOKED LIKE A LOST LITTLE GIRL. I'M SORRY, PESSY, HE THOUGHT... KNOWING IT WASN'T HIS FAULT BUT UNABLE TO HELP. THINKING IT THE RING ROCKED... HE COULDN'T REMEMBER DOING OFF.





HE SLURPED INTO A KIND OF DELIRIUM HE KEPT IMAGINING HIMSELF LETTING ESCAPE OF THE KING, DRIVING QUIETLY INTO THE LIGHT GREEN, THEN DARKER GREEN, THEN PURPLE DEPTHS... GENTLY, PEACEFULLY HE'D BLINK OPEN HIS EYES AND FIND HIMSELF STILL, CLUTCHING IT SOMEHOW, POGGY GRUBBING AT HIM WITH DULL, LOST EYES.

HE BECAME DEAD INSIDE. HE HARDLY NOTICED THE ACHES IN HIS ARMS. IN HIS STOMACH. THE ROOING RING MESSENGER/DEAD HIM. BUT HE GREW HUNGRY AT NOON AND HALLED UP THE CHERRY ALS TO HIS SQUARE. HE FOUND HIMSELF THINKING HED LOST THIRDS AS LONG NOW. AND THEN NOT CARING. /

ONCE HE LOOKED UP FROM HIS STUPOR TO SEE A GULL PERCHED ON HIS WIFE'S HEAD. HIS MOUTH DROPPED OPEN AND HE HUNG THERE, STARING OPTICALLY AT IT. THEN HE NOTICED ONE OF FREDDY'S EYES WAS MISSING AND THE DARK STAIN ON THE GULL'S BEAK. HE SCREAMED LOUDLY AND IT FLEW AWAY.



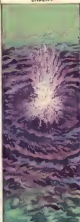


LATER HE REALIZED IT WAS A STUPID THING TO DO. HE COULD HAVE EATEN THE BULL EYEFUL. HE ARRANGED THE PADDLE IN FRONT OF HIM AND WAITED FOR ANOTHER BIRD. NONE CAME. HE LICKED HIS LIPS. "I DON'T CARE ANYWAY... I'M GOING TO DIE...!"

HE WAS HALF-ASLEEP IN LATE AFTERNOON WHEN THE RING JERKED VIOLENTLY ONCE. HE LOOKED UP GREEDILY, TRYING TO ORGANIZE HIS THOUGHTS. AND THEY WERE SOMETHING "A ROCK" SURE? HE GAZED ABOUT. THE OCEAN WAS PLACID.



THEN THE RING ROLLED HIM UNDER.



HE BOSSSED BACK UP, JACKING WITH AFTER STILL HOLDING THE RING. WHAT WAS HAPPENING?

BELOW HIM A DARK SHADOW GLOVED BY TERROR GRIPPED HIM.



HE ROLLED THE PADDLE IN FRONT OF HIM AND HUNG ON TO THE RING WITH ONE HAND, WAITING FOR THE SHADOW TO RETURN. WHEN IT DID HE PUT HIS FACE INTO THE WATER AND DABBED AT IT SAVAGELY. THE SHADOW SHOT AWAY.

A SHARF OF TERROR SEIZED HIS BODY. HE GRABBED THE PADDLE INSTANTLY, JERKING HIS HEAD IN ALL DIRECTIONS. A HUNDRED FEET FROM HIM A GRAY FIN SURFACED. HE HEARD HIMSELF WHIMPER.



A DOZEN FEET FROM HIM THE FIN DISAPPEARED. HE OPENED HIS EYES UNDER THE STANDING SALT WATER AND GAZED AT THE SLEEK BEAR WITH THE PADDLE. HE APPRESSED THE RING. ROLLED HIM UNDER.



HE SURFACED, COUGHING AND SNEEZING AND SPITTING UP BILE. HE JERKED THE RIDDLE ABOUT, SEARCHING WITH TEAR-FILLED EYES.



THE SHADOW LOOMED BENEATH HIM. HE WAITED THIS TIME. HEATED UNTIL THE MAN OPENED HIS EYES. THEN HE JAMMED DOWN HARD. THE RIDDLE STRUCK SOMETHING.



HE PULLED THE RIDDLE OUT THE SMOOTH WOOD, ENDED IN A DARNED STAMP. HE WIPED AT HIS EYES AND STARED DOWN AT THE SURFACE. THE SHARK WAS GONE. HIS PEGGY'S LEFT ARM JUST BELOW THE KNEE. HE SCREAMED HIS FRUSTRATION, WAITING FOR THE SHARK TO RETURN. IT DIDN'T.



SUNSET HIT THE ENTIRE SKY ARISE. SOMEWHERE HIS BRAIN REGISTERED ITS BEAUTY, BUT HE DIDN'T FEEL IT. THE RING ROCKED CEASELESSLY. I HAVEN'T EATEN IN TWO DAYS, HE THOUGHT. I'M DYING. IT SEEMED IMPOSSIBLE NOW THAT HE'D EVER EATEN. HE CLOSED HIS EYES AND SAW PEGGY ON THE BOAT OF THEIR YACHT...



HE ALIGNED THE ROCKING RING IN HIS ARMS AND THE RING BECAME PEGGY ROCKING HIM AGAINST HER BODY, RUNNING HER NAILS THROUGH HIS HAIR, ASKING HIM WHAT HE'D LIKE FOR DINNER.



"I WANT YOU FOR DINNER," HE SAID AND SHE WINGED A KISSER AT HIM IN MOCK REPROACHMENT AND HE TOOK THE FINGER AND KISSED IT AND HER NECK AND HER CHEEK AND HER LIPS. SOFT AND WARM AND SWEET HE SAID, "LET'S SKIP DINNER..."



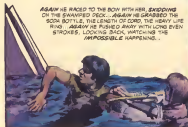
THEY KISSED EACH OTHER IN THE DARK CABIN AND SHE LOOKED UP AT HIM WITH HER LITTLE GUILTY EYES AND PLACED HIS HAND AGAINST HER BREAST AND SAID, "FEEL MY HEART? IT'S BEATING JUST FOR YOU. WHATEVER HAPPENS, DON'T LET ANYBODY OR ANYTHING TAKE IT FROM YOU."



HE FELT THE SHIP SNAPPING ABRUPTLY BENEATH THEM... SAW THE SUDDEN LOOK OF FEAR IN PEGGY'S EYES. HE KNEW AGAIN THE AGONY OF RUNNING AWAY FROM THE SHOCK OF FEELING SALT WATER LAP ABOUT HIS ANKLES...



A MIND-BENDING SCREECH BROKE HIS REVERIE. HE JOINTED UP, EYES FLYING CONFUSEDLY ON HIS WIFE'S CORPSE... AS IF SHE MIGHT SUPPLY ANSWERS. HIS STOMACH TWISTED; HER FACE WAS HALF GONE. THE SKY WAS FILLED WITH GULLS...



AGAIN HE RACED TO THE BOW WITH HER, SNAPPING ON THE SWAMPED DECK... AGAIN HE GRABBED THE SODA BOTTLE, THE LENGTH OF CORD, THE HEAVY LIFE RING... AGAIN HE PUSHED AWAY WITH LONG EVEN STROKES, LOOKING BACK, WATCHING THE IMPOSSIBLE HAPPENING...



HE GRABBED UP THE RIDDLE, LOOKING DOWN AS HE DID SO HIS SKIN GREW TIGHT. THE SEA WAS ALIVE WITH SHARKS...

AN IMMENSE BLUE SHARK BRUSHED PAST HIS LEG. THE RING JERKED, JARRING HIS TEETH. HE STRUCK OUT WITH THE BROKEN RATTLE. THE WATER THUNDERED, ROARED. ANOTHER SHARK RUSHED UP BENEATH HIM. THE RING SNAPPED, TORE FROM HIS GRASP...



HE LURCHED THROUGH THE WATER, GASPING... CAUGHT THE RING JUST AS IT JERKED AGAIN VIOLENTLY. HE CRIED OUT... HIS VOICE LIKE A DRY RATTLE. HIS WIFE'S BODY BOBBED AND JUMPED, ARMS FLOPPING IN ALTE PROTEST THEY WERE BUTCHERING HER...

HE SPUN DOWNWARD WITH THE PADDLE AGAIN AND AGAIN, SCREAMING AT THEM. THE SEA TURNED TO WHITE FOAM AROUND HIM... THEY AROD THE PADDLE WAS WRENCHED FROM HIS HANDS. HE FOUND IT FLOATING NEARBY... HE TRAPPED IT... ZABBED AGAIN...!



THE MOMENT HE PAUSED TO CATCH HIS BREATH, THE GULLS RETURNED. HE TRIED TO YELL, BUT HIS VOICE WOULDNT WORK ANYMORE. HE WAVED HIS ARMS WEAKLY BUT THEY ONLY SUPPLIED THEIR FEATHERS AND CONTINUED THEIR CREEPY PLUCKING...!



THE RING JERKED AND THEY FLEW OFF SCREAMING. THE DARK SHAPES WERE BACK. HE JABBED OUT WEARILY WITH THE PADDLE. HE SAW THE CORD LOOSEN AROUND HIS WIFE'S WAIST... SAW HER BEGIN SLIPPING DOWNWARD INTO THE WATER. HE MOANED... GRABBED FOR HER...!



THE SHARKS MOVED OFF MOMENTARILY. HE HUNG IN THE WATER EXHAUSTED, CHIST AWAYING. THEN HE SCREAMED AGAIN. HIS WIFE WAS COVERED WITH GULLS. HE LIFTED THE PADDLE WITH LEADEN ARMS AND SHUNG WILDLY AT THEM.

HE HELD HER CLOSE AS THE GULLS SETTLED OVER THEM AND THE DARK SHAPES JERKED CONVULSIVELY AT THEIR IN THE TWIGS AND SPRAY-FLECTED SEA. HE CLOSED HIS EYES AND REDDY RAN HER FINGERS THROUGH HIS HAIR AND GROOINED "MOON FINE" TO HIM AND HE THOUGHT ABOUT WHAT HE WANTED FOR DINNER...!



THREE HOURS LATER HE WAS CLINGING ONLY TO THE LIFE RING WHEN THE SILVER SHAPES APPEARED ON THE HORIZON. SMOGAS EMERGED HIM!

EPILOGUE



END

PROLOGUE

HARVEY BASSINS WAS A PEACEFUL, SIMPLE, PLEBSY MAN. FOR MORE THAN FIFTY YEARS HE HAD DEDICATED HIS LIFE TO THE PLEASURES, THE HAPPINESS OF OTHERS.



HARVEY ALLOWED HIMSELF BUT TWO IMPULSES; HIS BEAUTIFUL DAUGHTER JOEY, AND THE AMUSEMENT PARK LAUGH PALACE. HE LOVED BOTH WITH A DEEP, SELFLESS PASSION.



WERNER TANNENBAUM, UNLIKE HARVEY BASSINS, WAS NEITHER PEACEFUL, SIMPLE NOR PLEBSY. HE, TOO, HAD DEDICATED HIS LIFE TO THE PURSUIT OF QUICK, EASY MONEY.



LIKE HARVEY, WERNER ALLOWED HIMSELF BUT TWO IMPULSES. WAS HE WAS WOMEN AND VIOLENCE.

WERNER DEALT IN PROMISCUOUS VIOLENCE. HE BOSE HIS SERVICES TO THOSE WHO COULD MEET AFFORD HIM; THE CORRUPT, THE VILE, THE DEFILERS OF THE MEAK.



WERNER HAD BUT ONE PRICE FOR HIS WORK: HIGH.



"Harvey Sharp Cookie" was a Sharp Cookie

HARVEY KNEW WHY THIS AWFUL THING HAD BEEN DONE TO HIS BEAUTIFUL JOEY

IT WAS A DREADFUL, VICIOUS CONRAD'S WAY OF FORCING HARVEY TO ABANDON THE FUN PALACE

A MAN... THE SAME MAN WHO HAD ATTACKED JOEY HAD COME TO SEE HARVEY EXACTLY TEN DAYS BEFORE JOEY'S "ACCIDENT". HE HAD PAPERS FOR HARVEY...

PAPERS THAT TURNED THE PALACE OVER TO A CORPORATION WHICH WOULD TEAR IT DOWN, REPLACE IT WITH NEW, HIGH-PRICED OCEAN FRONT CONDOMINIUMS.



UNLIKE PLAYLAND'S OTHER EXHIBITORS, HARVEY WAS NOT FRIGHTENED BY THE MAN'S WEATHERFUL INTIMIDATIONS. HE REFUSED TO SIMPLY SIGN HIS LIFE'S WORK AWAY.

AND THE MAN... THAT HORRIBLE CHILL MAN WITH THE CRUEL, EVIL EYES, SAID HE WOULD RETURN. HARVEY REMEMBERED HIS LOW, BARELY AUDIBLE THREAT VIVIDLY: "FOR EACH DAY YOU HOLD OUT, OLD MAN, THERE WILL BE A HORRIBLE, UNFORGETTABLE PENALTY."

TEN DARK DAYS, TEN TERRIFYING SACKS, THE MERCENARY, MERCILESS BASTARD HAD DESTROYED JOEY'S BEAUTIFUL, INNOCENT FACE AND BODY WITH A DULL, PAIN-WRECKED RAZOR BLADE.



AND TODAY... THE ELEVENTH DAY, HARVEY KNEW HE WOULD RETURN.

BUT THIS TIME, PEACEFUL, SIMPLE, PEOPLE HARVEY WOULD MEET HIM MOST ENTHUSIASTICALLY.



THE FUN PALACE HAD BUT **ONE** ENTRANCE... **ONE** EXIT BEHIND THE BEATED ELEVATOR TO HARVEY'S CONTROL BOOTH!

FROM ATOP THE CONSOLE OVERLOOKING AND CONTROLLING EACH OF THE PALACE'S AMUSEMENTS, THE OLD MAN FELT LIKE AN OMNIPOTENT, OMNISCIENT DEITY... TISSING EVERY MOVEMENT OF EVERY PATRON.



... TRYING TO LOOK MENACING AS THE PALACE'S **AGE** JETZ DROBLED HIS CLOTHING... OF THE HUNDRED FOOT **SLIDE** LUMPED HIS COLD HEART INTO HIS CRUEL THROAT.



WHEN HARVEY FINALLY SAW THE NATURAL, DISPISED FACE AT THE TICKET BOOTH, IT WAS NOT ALONE.

HARVEY KNEW HIS DAUGHTER'S ABRAILANT WOULD WANT TO SEE **NAME** AGAIN... TO ISSUE NEW THREATS... TO TRY TO CORNER THE OLD MAN INTO RUSHING AWAY THE NOW SOLE UNEXPLORED PASSION IN HIS LIFE.

AND SINCE THE ANTIQUATED AMUSEMENTER WAS MANING THE CONTROL TOWER, HARVEY KNEW, TOO, ANYONE WHO WISHED TO APPROACH HIM WOULD HAVE TO NAVIGATE THE PALACE'S **OBSTACLE** COURSE.



AND WHEN GEMRUD, HARVEY'S THIRST GIRL OF THIRTY YEARS, **BUFFER** THE OLD MAN ON THE PALACE INTERCOM, HARVEY UNDERSTOOD... AND KNEW HIS DAUGHTER'S ABRAILANT HAD, IN AN INCONSEQUENTIAL WAY, THREATENED HIM AGAIN.



A POLICE DETECTIVE WANTS TO SEE YOU HARVEY!

HAD HE NOT BEEN SO CONSUMED BY UNABATED AMBITION, HARVEY MIGHT HAVE CHUCKLED AT THE THOUGHT OF A HISSING GUNMAN HELPLESSLY LOST WITHIN THE FAMED **MINERAL** MAZE...



THE BEAST WOULD NOT EVEN ALLOW HARVEY THE PLEASURE OF SEEING HIM AT THE INSIGNIFICANT OF THE PALACE'S AMUSEMENTS.



HARVEY WASN'T REALLY SURPRISED TO SEE THE MONSTER WHO HAD MUTILATED HIS JOEY WITH A POLICE ESCORT.



HEBBIE, WHO HAD OWNED THE BOLLES CONCERTS ADJOINING THE FUN PALACE FOR MOST OF THE AMUSEMENT PARK'S FIFTY YEARS, HAD WARNED HARVEY THAT PEOPLE WHO WERE PUSHING THE PARK OUT OF BUSINESS WERE **POISONFUL...INFLUENTIAL IN CIVIL AFFAIRS.**

IT WAS AN IRREFUTABLE FACT THAT THEY HAD THE POLICE IN THEIR PROVERBIAL WELL-LINED POCKET.



HEBBIE WAS ONLY ONE OF THE MANY DISSENTING SENATORS WHO GUARDED HIS INTEREST IN THE PARK AWAY AFTER HEBBIE, THE KING DUMMAN, **THREATENED HIS GRANDCHILDREN.**



ONE LONG-ENTRANCED MONSTER MADE A VIRTUAL **SHOOT** TOWN. EVERYONE AGREED IT WOULD BE ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE HARVEY TOO, WAS FORCED TO ABANDON THE FUN HOUSE.



EVENTUALLY, THE CONDOMINIUMS' "ENFORCER" PUSHED EVERYONE OUT, **MONKEY**, WHO HAD RUN THE FEELING WHEEL FOR A QUARTER OF A CENTURY... **WALLY**, THE OLD YET WHO OWNED THE DYING BELL... EVEN **OLD CHERRY**, THE EX-CIRCUS STRONGMAN WHO BARELY CARED OUT A LYING EXHIBITIONING HIS FEATS OF STRENGTH.

AND IN A WAY, THEY WERE RIGHT. THE KILLER KNEW THE OLD MAN WOULD NOT BE INTIMIDATED...



THAT THREAT OF **ANYMORE** HARM TO EITHER HARVEY OR HIS DAUGHTER WOULD ONLY FORCE THE OLD MAN TO STAND HIS GROUND MORE STUBBORNLY.

IN THE END, THE DUMMAN RESORTED TO THE ONLY WEAPON POTENT ENOUGH TO MOVE HARVEY OUT OF HIS BELOVED PALACE: A LEGAL NOTICE OF BUILDING CONDEMNATION.



YOU'VE GOT TWENTY-FOUR HOURS. OLD MAN EITHER THIS **TRAP** IS PUT INTO SAFE CON-
DITION

OR I'LL BE BACK TO CLOSE THE DOORS **PERMANENTLY** AND **LEGALLY!**

FOR FIFTY YEARS HARVEY HAD RUN THE FUN PALACE DILIGENTLY, HONESTLY. EACH NIGHT, HE PERSONALLY SERVICED THE ATTRACTIONS... KEEPING THEM SAFE AND **CLEAN**.



THE OLD MAN KNEW THERE WAS NOTHING HE COULD DO TO "REPAIR" THE FUN PALACE OVERNIGHT. THERE WAS SIMPLY NOTHING TO REPAIR.



AND DESPITE THAT, HARVEY REALIZED, ON THE MORROW, JODY'S ASSAILANT WOULD RETURN, AND FIND SOME REASON TO CLOSE THE DOORS OF THE FUN PALACE FOREVER.



THE OLD MAN SLUMBERED IN DISPAIR. HE WATCHED THOUSANDS... HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS, COME... TO ENJOY THEMSELVES. TO LAUGH. TO PLAY. TO FORGET FOR AWHILE THE PROBLEMS OF THE WORLD.



AND BECAUSE OF HARVEY'S DILIGENT, LOVING CARE THE FUN PALACE HAD REMAINED AS NEW, AS FRESH TODAY AS IT HAD BEEN IN 1926 WHEN IT FIRST OPENED.



TWENTY-FOUR HOURS. THAT WAS LEGALLY ALL THE TIME REMAINING FOR THE FUN PALACE. IT WAS HARVEY WANT TO CRY. HOW COULD HE FIGHT THE LAW, HE WONDERED? IT SIMPLY WAS NOT MEANT TO DEFY THE AMERICAN SYSTEM?



HARVEY WATCHED JODY'S TEARS... TEARS FOR A FEELSIE OLD FOO... AND HIS BELOVED HOUSE OF MERRIMENT. JODY... HER SUFFERING... HER STRENGTH SEEMED TO SPILL INTO THE OLD ENTERTAINER.



HIS BACK STIFFENED. HIS CHIN JUTTED FORTH WITH UNUSUAL YOUTHFUL DEFIANCE.

TWENTY-FOUR HOURS SEEMED SO SHORT A TIME... AND YET HARVEY YOUNG, HE WOULD NOT GIVE UP FIFTY YEARS OF DEDICATION... OF HAPPINESS... WITHOUT A FIGHT.

THE CRAFTY ARGUMENTER KNEW EXACTLY THE TYPE OF MODIFICATION NEEDED FOR THE "INSPECTOR" WHO WOULD RETURN ON THE MORGON.



WHEN IT WAS TIME TO CLOSE THE PALACE... WHEN THE LAST SMILING PATRON WANDERED INTO THE NIGHT, GUSTAVE SAVED WITH JODY WHILE OLD HARVEY RACED TO PURCHASE SEVERAL OF THE LARGEST CAGES HE COULD FIND OF THE ONE ITEM NEEDED TO SAVE HIS BELOVED FUNHOUSE.



THROW AWAY THE NIGHT, HARMONIZING SOUNDS EMANATED FROM THE RAPIDLY LIGHTED, LOW-WARMED AMUSEMENT CENTER.



TIRELESSLY, THE OLD MAN LABORED UNTIL DAWN, EMBIGGLED WITH NEW HOPE AND ELATED EXPECTATIONS.

THAT MORNING WAS THE FIRST IN FIFTY YEARS THAT THE FUN PALACE REMAINED CLOSED.

IT HURT HARVEY DEEPLY TO SEE DISAPPOINTMENT IN THE EYES OF THOSE WHO HAD COME TO ENJOY THE PALACE'S AMUSEMENTS... TO CLOSE THEMSELVES FOR AWHILE. YET, THE OLD ENTREPRENEUR KNEW HE MUST WAIT FOR THE ONE MAN WHO WOULD INEVITABLY COME.



AT THE PALACE'S MASTER CONTROL BOOTH, HARVEY WAS SECURE IN THE KNOWLEDGE THAT ALL WAS READY.



WHEN HE SAW THE "INSPECTOR" AT THE GATEWAY ENTRANCE, HARVEY PUSHED THE PROPER BUTTON TO ADMIT HIM... BREAKING INTO THE NAMED HALL OF MIRRORS.



THE OLD MAN KNEW THE MURDER MESSIAH WOULD FIND NOTHING AWAY IN THE TRISTING, RESPECTIVE MAZE. HE KNEW, ALSO, THAT THE ASSASSIN MIGHT FIND EVERYTHING TOO PERFECT... TOO SPOTLESS AND SAFE.



...AND CREATE IMPERFECTIONS OF HIS OWN THAT COULD LEAD TO THE PALACE'S CONDEMNATION.

HE DID...



...AND INSTANTLY SLICED HIS ELBOW ON A HALL OF SHARP EDGED RAZOR-BLADES PROTRUDING FROM BEHIND THE SHATTERED MIRROR PANE.



AGAIN THE KILLER CASHED OUT IN ANGER.

AND AGAIN, RAZOR SHARP BLADES DUG INTO... BENT HIS FLESH GLOOFY HE HAD TO BE MORE CAREFUL. HE HAD THOUGHT TO HIMSELF.

THE OLD MAN HAD CRAFTILY ANTICIPATED HIS BREAKING MIRRORS, YET, HE HAD BEEN SURE THE ASSASSIN WOULD HAVE TO BE MORE CAREFUL. HE HAD THOUGHT TO HIMSELF.



HARVEY SMILED AS HE SAW JOEY'S HURRICANE ASSAILANT STEP FROM THE MISSED STEP WITH A CUT ARM, A BLEEDING LEG.



WERNER SAW THE OLD MAN'S LEEB AND RETURNED HIS SCOWL WITH ONE MORE HATEFUL... MORE AGONIZING.

AND THEN, THE HISSING GUNMAN SAW SOMETHING ELSE, ONE OF RESULTS OF HARVEY'S VIGILANT ALL-NIGHT RENOVATION. THE ONE HUMPHRED FOOT WOODEN CHUTE WAS STUPPED WITH ZITTING SHARP-SHOOT RAZOR SLADES.



THE CAUTIOUS KILLER REELED BACKWARDS, RETREATING FROM THE DEADLY CHUTE BEFORE HIM. QUICKLY, THOROUGHLY, HIS EYES SEARCHED FOR AN ALTERNATE PASSAGWAY, BYPASSING THE RAZOR-STUPPED SLIDE.



A LEERING, HATEFUL SMILE PLAYED ABOUT HIS LIPS AS HE SPIED A NARROW MAINTENANCE PATH TO ONE SIDE OF THE DEADLY SLOPE.



HE SLOWLY STEPPED TOWARD THE PASSAGE... JUST AS HARVEY PUSHED A BUTTON IN THE CONTROL TOWER... SENING A BLAST OF WARM AIR INTO WERNER'S FACE...



...AIR CONTAINING MILLIONS OF TINY SMASHED RAZOR SLADE PARTICLES! THE GUNMAN HOWLED AS BLOOD DRIPPED FREELY FROM HIS AGONIZED EYES!



AND THEN... IN A MOMENT OF SUSPENDED BALANCE, WERNER FELL, STUMBLING, SCREAMING... ONTO THE SLIDING DEATH TRAP!



ONE HUNDRED FEET OF HORROR LATER, THE CHAIRS HEARD TAKING BATH LOOKED MORE LIKE A SHOT-BURNED BALL OF BLOODY HAMMERS THAN A HUMAN BEING.



HARVEY ONLY SHOOK HIS HEAD SADLY IN THE CONTROL TOWER OF THE FUN PALACE. HE HAD WORKED ALL NIGHT, EXPECTING THE KILLER TO BE A MUCH TOUGHER, MORE ENDURING MAN.



HARVEY HAD SIMPLY OVER-ESTIMATED HIS OPPONENT. HERE THE KILLER LAY... DEAD ALREADY!

AND HE HADN'T EVEN GOTTEN TO USE THE SLABES. THE SLABES ON THE HANDS OF THE... EACH EMBROIDERED WITH THOUSANDS OF SINGLE-ENDED RAZOR SLABES.



THE OLD MAN SMILED SOFTLY, AND LOVINGLY PUT HIS ARM AROUND HIS DAUGHTER.



THEY'LL SEND ABOVE LIKE HIM, YOU KNOW!

HARVEY, DEKTRUDE AND ZODY REALIZED THAT ONLY A BATTLE HAD BEEN WON. THE WAR WAS YET TO BE WAGED.



SOLEMNLY, ALMOST WITH CONCERN AND RESPECT FOR HIS ADDRESSORS, HARVEY SILENTLY HOPED THAT THE NEXT MAN THEY SENT WOULD OFFER SLIGHTLY MORE OF A CHALLENGE!



END

NOW YOU SEE IT...



COME, FAIR ONE... I HAVE
RIGHTFULLY WON YOUR
FAVOR IN BATTLE BY
COMBAT! SURRENDER
TO ME YOUR
VIRTUE.

MY VIRTUE'S
ABOUT AS
SURRENDERED
AS IT'S EVER
GONNA GET!

YOU SPURN
MY ADVANCES,
FAIR PRINCESS
OF LOHAUGH?

"FAIR PRINCESS"
MY KIESTER!
I'M YOUR WIFE,
YOU BLITHERING
SPACE-
JOCKEY!

WHERE
THE HELL DID
YOU PUT THE
SELECTORY?

AH,
HERE
IT IS!

AW,
C'MON,
DELLA!
LEAVE
IT BE!

THAT'S
MORE
LIKE
IT!

DARN IT, I CAN NEVER
GET ENOUGH BLUE IN
THE OCEAN! HARRY,
YOU TUNE IT IN...!

CRIMINEY! THE OCEAN!
ALWAYS THE BLOODY
OCEAN! WHY NOT A
TROPICAL JUNGLE
ONCE IN A WHILE?

I HAPPEN
TO LIKE THE
OCEAN. IT'S
RESTFUL...
AND PLEASE
STOP PUTTING
WEIRD CLOTHES
ON ME WHILE
I'M ASLEEP...
IT'S CREEPY.

CAN'T YOU GET
SOME GULLS IN?
YOU KNOW HOW
I LIKE GULLS...!

GULLS! OCEAN! CRIPES!
I NEVER HAVE ANY FUN!



HARRY, COME LOOK!
IT'S AN OLD
AL PACINO
MOVIE.

HARRY,
WHAT
GIVES?

HARRY, FOR CHRIST'S SAKE,
IT'S RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE
OF THE MOVIE!

STAND
BACK, MY
QUEEN! I'LL
HANDLE
THIS!

YIPE!

DIE,
HELL-
SPAWN
OF
DEMOS!

HARRY!
FOR GOD'S
SAKE, TURN
DOWN THE
VOLUME!

IT WON'T BE BOTHERING YOU
AGAIN, YOUR HIGHNESS!

DELLA!
MY NAME'S
DELLA!

NOW WILL YOU
GIVE ME THE
BOX SO I
CAN FINISH
MY MOVIE?

MORON!





HARRY! IT ISN'T
WORKING! IT--
GOOD LORD!
WHAT'S THAT?

...UH...I'M
AFRAID THAT'S
OUR SPACE
CRAFT, DELLA.
I...UH...WE
TOOK A LITTLE
TRIP LAST
NIGHT
AND...

HARRY!
YOU
DIDN'T!

I THOUGHT PERHAPS YOU'D GET INTO THE
MOOD IF YOU SAW THE REAL THING, SO I
FOUND THIS LITTLE PREHISTORIC PLANET
NOT FAR FROM HOME AND...UH...
DRAUGGED YOU, AND...

YOU
IDIOT!
WE'RE
STRANDED!
WE'RE
DOOMED!

IT'S NOT
AS BAD AS
ALL THAT!
THERE'S
PLENTY OF
FRESH FRUIT
ON THE PLANET
AND I HAVE
MY GUNS...

HARRY!
HARRY!

YOU MORON!
YOU JERK!
YOU--

PLEASE, DELLA...TRY TO
BE CALM! HERE, HAVE A
BANANA...



YOU MEAN WE
WERENT REALLY
ON ANOTHER
PLANET? YOU
MEAN THIS
BOX WAS
JUST A
FAKE?



I AM
TONDELAYO...
FOREST
GODDESS!

DELLA!
YOU... YOU
REALLY MEAN
IT? YOU'RE
NOT
KIDDING?

BUT
WHY?

I THINK IT
WAS THE WAY
YOU LOOKED
IN THE
FIRELIGHT!

YAH-HOO! COME TO ME, YOU
LITTLE FOREST NYMPH!

TONDELAYO
MUST BE
CAUGHT!

END

THEY'RE HERE... ALL AROUND ME! YOU GET SO YOU CAN SENSE THOSE THINGS. ALL HEROES USED TO HAVE IT!



THE KNACK, I MEAN, OF KNOWING WHEN DANGER WAS BREATHING DOWN YOUR NECK... LIKE RIGHT NOW. BUT IT DIDN'T MATTER...



...THEY HAD ALLOWED ME ENOUGH TIME TO PUT ON MY GLOVES! AND THAT WAS THEIR MISTAKE...!



...THEIR LAST!

THEY DIDN'T KNOW THEY WERE STALKING FAR MORE THAN A MAN.

I AM LEGEND... FOR I AM...

THE
Last
Super
Hero



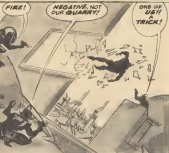
I HADN'T PUT ON THE GLOVES IN YEARS. NO REASON TO, NOT IN A WORLD WHERE ALL ANTI-TARTARY UNITS HAD LONG SINCE DISBANDED...



...WHERE THE LAST FULL-TIME POLICE FORCE WAS RETIRED WELL OVER A DECADE AGO...



...AND BECAUSE MENTALIZOPHIC TREATMENTS MADE THE CRIMINAL MIND EXTINCT, THE WHOLE INSTITUTION OF CRIME BECAME A SUBJECT FOR NOSTALGIA ADDICTS!



SO I HAD PUT THE GLOVES AWAY YEARS BEFORE. IN A PERFECT WORLD THERE WAS NO NEED FOR A HERO.

...NO INSURMOUNTABLE ODDS SO DEEP, NO DANGEROUS ADVERSARIES TO CHALLENGE...

NOT MUCH OF ANYTHING REQUIRING THE SERVICES OF ONE SUCH AS MYSELF!



BUT THAT WAS BEFORE...
BEFORE THE INVASION
STARTED! I CAN REMEMBER
THE DAY I FIRST BECAME
AWARE OF THEIR MENACING
PRESENCE...



I SAW ONE OF
THEM... JUMPED
ON... STANDING
IN PUBLIC IN
BROAD DAYLIGHT...
DISGUISED AS A
NATIONAL
GUARDSMAN...
BUT BEHIND
HIS VISOR...



...DEADLY,
MENACING,
ALIEN!

SOON THEY BEGAN TO SHOW UP
EVERYWHERE... INFESTING THE
CITY LIKE A PLAGUE, AND PEOPLE
WENT ABOUT THEIR BUSINESS, UN-
AWARE OF THE DANGER...



UNCONCERNED, EVEN, ABOUT
THE MASSIVE CONCENTRATION
OF HELMETED TROOPS IN
THEIR CITY.

AND THEN IT DAMNED ON ME...
THE ONLY EXPLANATION
POSSIBLE!



SOMEHOW THE INVADERS
HAD SUBJECTED THE GENERAL
PUBLIC TO THEIR MYSTIFIC
CONTROL, IN ORDER TO
KEEP THEM, PEOPLE!

WHY I SEEMED IMMUNE TO
THEIR CONTROL, I DIDN'T KNOW.
PERHAPS THE CONSTANT MENTAL
STRESS OF MY SUPER-
HERO YEARS HAD FORTIFIED
MY WILL POWER AGAINST
SUCH OUTSIDE FORCES.

BUT WHAT
EVER THE
REASON,
EVENTUALLY
THEY
SEEMED TO
SINGLE ME
OUT...

WHY AM I
I LOOK
JUST LIKE
EVERYBODY
ELSE...



SOMEHOW THEY KNEW... THEY
KNEW WHO I ONCE WAS! AND
THEY WERE STARTING TO CLOSE
IN ON ME.

THEY WON'T MAKE
A SCENE IN PUBLIC...
THEY'LL FOLLOW ME
HOME AND MAKE
THEIR MOVE THERE.





THEY MADE
THEIR MOVE...
ALL RIGHT...
BUT I MOVED
FASTER!

NEARLY AS
FAST AS I WAS
IN THE DAYS
OF MY
PRIME!

STILL, THEY'VE
BROUGHT ME OUT
INTO THE
OPEN...



...WHICH WAS PROBABLY
THEIR **OBJECTIVE** IN THE
FIRST PLACE. EVEN IF IT
MEANT SACRIFICING
SEVERAL MEN TO DO
IT!



SO I MUST REMAIN
ON AN EVER-WATCHFUL
ALERT...



...FOR
THIS IS
WAR
NOW

I AM MANKIND'S
LAST HOPE AGAINST
THESE
OVERWHELMING
NUMBERS OF
ANONYMOUS
ALIENS.



LOOK
IN
THE
SKY!

DON'T
HE KNOW
FLYING'S
ILLEGAL!

I DON'T
BELIEVE IT,
HAROLD. LOOK
WHO IT IS...
AND AFTER ALL
THESE YEARS
IT'S HIM!

GIVE ME A
SECOND...IT'S
ON THE TIP OF
MY TONGUE--



IT DON'T **BOOTHER** ME... WHY
SHOULD IT? I COULDN'T EVEN
REMEMBER JUST NOW MANY
YEARS IT HAD BEEN SINCE I
ROARED OVER THESE STREETS.

I ONLY KNEW IT FELT **GREAT**
TO BE DOING IT AGAIN.

AND THEN I HAPPENED TO CATCH MY REFLECTION ACROSS THE NORTH FACE OF A MASSIVE SKY-TOWER... ONLY TO SEE I WAS NO LONGER ALONE!

TWO OF THEM...CLOSING IN FROM THE REAR.



MY PLAN WAS TO ZIP AROUND THE PERIMETER OF THE SKY-TOWER AND SURPRISE MY TWO PURSUERS FROM THEIR REAR!

DAWN! DAWN!
IT'S NO GO!



THERE MUST HAVE BEEN TWO DOZENS OF THEM ALL TOLD... CHARGING DIRECTLY AT ME *AND BEHIND THOSE FACELESS BLACK VESSES... I COULD SOMEHOW SENSE TWO DOZEN SUBTLE SMILES!

PURSUER AND INTER-CEPT! I WANT HIM ALIVE!



IN MOMENTS OF EXTREME CRISIS...SUPER HEROES ARE CLASSICALLY KNOWN FOR PROVERBIAL QUICK-THINKING! THIS WAS JUST SUCH A MOMENT AS I LOOKED TO THE HEAVENS...AND FOUND SALVATION!



IT WAS A ROBOT-DRIVEN CARGO JETTER PASSING OVERHEAD! I KNEW MY ONE CHANCE TO STAVE OFF THAT ARMY WAS TO BRING IT DOWN!



YET EVEN WITH IMMINENT DEATH BEARING DOWN UPON THEM, THEY STILL CARE FOR ME! I HAD NO TIME TO ESCAPE...!

GRAB HIM!
GRAB
HIS ARMS!

I READ ABOUT THIS ONE... HE'S HELPLESS IF HE CAN'T BRING HIS HANDS TOGETHER!

KEEP THEM APART! APART!



...AND THE QUASINATIONAL FLAG FLEW AT
HALF-MAST TODAY AS THE NATIONAL
GUARD MOURNED THE LOSS OF THEIR
ENTIRE ALPHA SQUADRON...



...TWENTY-FIVE BRAVE YOUNG MEN WHO GAVE
THEIR LIVES WHILE THEY WERE DESTROYING THE
PUBLIC MENACE... ONE DARK NORTH...



...A FORMER LAWYER WHO
WAS SOMETHING OF A
"SUPERHERO" IN THE
1990'S, CRUSADING
UNDER THE NAME
FURYFISTS!

...AUTHORITIES
BELIEVE NORTH
WAS THE LAST
OF HIS KIND...



STUPID, STUPID FOOLS! DIDN'T
ANYBODY WONDER WHY THOSE
"BRAVE YOUNG MEN" DIDN'T
REMOVE THEIR HELMETS
DURING THE MEMORIAL
SERVICE?



NOW IT'S UP TO ME AND
ME ALONE TO STRIKE
OFF THE INVASION...



...FOR I AM THE LAST
SUPER HERO!



MONSTER SHIRTS! NOW YOU CAN "WEAR" A WARREN COVER!

TOP QUALITY! THOSE WORDS DESCRIBE THESE FINE SHIRTS! THE FULL COLOR SCENES ARE MORE DECALS WHICH FADE OR PEEL BUT ARE DYED INTO DURABLE POLYESTER & COTTON. THEY ALL CARRY THE FAMOUS WEAR-ORATED WARRANTY. THIS MEANS TOTAL WASHABILITY & LONG LIFE!



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★★★★★



2004 FM CONVENTION BAG: Enjoy your bright red bag with its yellow, black & white gold original! Be assured in you have much you can start into of 17" x 14" of heavy weight vinyl plastic, with a snap-up handle & collectors' item for any Monsters fan! You'll also find an original picture of our FM Monsters team! #2634 \$9.95

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JAMES WHALE'S CLASSIC FRANKENSTEIN! JOHN HUSTON'S "THE MALTESE FALCON"
2 SOFT COVER FILM BOOKS THAT PROVE THAT A PICTURE IS WORTH 1000 WORDS! WHAT ARE 1000'S OF PICTURES WORTH? SEE FOR YOURSELF!



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 end of it comes the world but I
 will certainly continue your heart. Can
 I please of high school, printed a
 full letter, the I will wind-up season
 and high yet because. But again

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and, you can have 11 stars before being
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Steve Austin begins and end better
in my eye. We strength the connection
that of my team's action packed stories
to all the million dollar
-1995-11-09



Zany dialogue and macabre music... make this album a must for everyone - young and old! A classic zombie spoof!

This is the original record recording from the Beatles' "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band".

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WITH YOUR FAVORITE CD
SCARE THE PANTS OFF



WHEN YOU ARE ALONE O
HOUL. "NIGHTWATCH" WIL
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Presidential Professional and
emancipatory Young and old This record
was created with you in mind. Add
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Largest composers. Deeds multiply.
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A classic tale of the supernatural about a magical gypsyman with a life-lying horse. 3 suspense movies, and a shilling romance! This is the story that has inspired hundreds of imitations in books, films, comic books. Now it's in the big screen, and it's read by George Takei. *Across the Universe*. MCA/UMV. PG-13. \$22.98.



Famous ghoul and beast stories re-
by William O'Connell, famous radio
novel tales by Charles Dickens &
crossed names mainly: Owl Creek Bridge
and The Sign of the Cross. Also Robert L.
Lawrence's The Body Snatchers, p.
13. South West ST. Reading Room
Novel 11119 NO M082 + 11111



When reggae was king in the late '60s and early '70s, America was spared out of its way by *Witch Queens' Lighter Side*. A sampling of some of the best! Features the legendary tale of the Cheeches (there's that downbeat again). Plus others, a lively



I fully understand your point of view. But the suggestion that I stand on the fence? This report should not be influenced by the very people it is meant to assist. That will give you some idea of the grammaticality of the sentence, correct? Forward! But I am in Warsaw now. I will be back in a few days.



The historic adventures depicted from the original Motion Picture District Theatre, famous site of all time, the Empire State Building. Open to the public in 1931, the building is a landmark in New York City. The building is a landmark in New York City. The building is a landmark in New York City.



Music of mystery captured in a new disc. (Info Operations of Sound) used a double-digit sound to use you to find it. (Info) by in the (Info) moments of the (Info) best. (Info) version. (Info) by the (Info) On



Put on your seat belt! That is your mental hint to be a student and keep folks with a conscience! The second by Hollywood musician and mental mess maker Yoko Ono asks: where you live? Or her husband John, 1964, wrote: "I'll be on my way to HAWAII, HAWAII, HAWAII" ON DRUGS: HAWAII, HAWAII, HAWAII



A lightning narrative by Hammer Film's Christopher Lee. A new life at the bloody Court and his victims. Complete with full symphony orchestration and baroque sound effects. Taps 2 features, music #1. Hammer Film ORIONLA #1266-17 97



30 minutes of sheer terror, brought to you by the efforts of famous Master Investigator Sean the Human Vampire Collector's Hunt! Play 8-11 pm in room the last 100 rooms of PM, so wait in when you read the NINE 100 stories a PM Get a Christmas present, last 1000 FAMOUS WORKING DREAM 12:30



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Jerome Curry found an amulet... a very special magic that transformed him... allowed him to enter... to animate... a being long dead. Jerome Curry became a mummy... And the mummy walked. Staked the deserted streets of Cairo. Eager to destroy! Rendi! Kill! Then return to his own human body... and live as a man, 'til the next violent, exciting act of wanton, brutal murder! This is the mummy. Until the unthinkable happens. The ancient amulet is stolen... carried out of his reach... and Jerome Curry is trapped. He'll remain the mummy for always. Unless he can find the amulet and the magic reverts. Or can find death. For excitement, adventure, horror, read THE MUMMY WALKS, in fabulous EERIE #78, with incredible color!

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